

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully submit this Request for Reconsideration in response to the Final Office Action mailed on 9 April 2007, consideration of which is earnestly solicited. In the present Request, no claims have been amended, added, or canceled. Therefore, claims 1-50 as previously presented are pending in the application for reconsideration.

In the Final Office Action mailed on 9 April 2007, the Examiner rejected claims of the present application under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Abrahamson et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0109431) (the "Abrahamson reference"), Zhao (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2005/0059397), and other references. In response, the Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections and submits that all pending claims are allowable over the prior art of record for at least the following reasons.

For a proper rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) the prior art must teach or suggest each and every claimed limitation. In the present case, the prior art fails to teach each and every limitation of the claims. Specifically, the prior art fails to teach or suggest the steps of claims 1-17 which occur either "in response to regaining signal coverage from an out-of-coverage condition with the non-home communication network" or "in response to being powered-on from a power-off state entered while operating with the non-home communication network." As recited in such claims, the following steps are employed in response to such events: "if a home communication network of the mobile station is identified as being available, selecting and operating with the home communication network" and "otherwise, if the non-home communication network is identified as being available, selecting and operating with the non-home communication network."

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner mischaracterizes or misreads the claims as revised in the previous Amendment, and additionally fails to adequately demonstrate and articulate the rejection of claims for the same reasons. In particular, for example, the Examiner confuses the claimed "home" network with a "non-home" network or

RPLMN/VPLMN in the Abrahamson reference. In the rejection of claim 1, for example, the Examiner indicates that the Abrahamson reference teaches “if a RPLMN or VPLMN, which reads on claimed non-home communication network, of the mobile station is identified as being available” (see page 3 at lines 4-5 of the Final Office Action), and provides support in the Abrahamson reference for the same, despite the fact that the limitations of claim 1 recite “if a home communication network of the mobile station is identified as being available.” As another example in relation to the rejection of claim 13, the Examiner indicates that the Abrahamson reference teaches “the second non-home communication network designated as a RPLMN or VPLMN” (see page 7 at lines 20-21 of the Final Office Action), and provides support in the Abrahamson reference for the same, despite the fact that the limitations of claim 13 recite “the second communication network designated as a home communication network.” Even in relation to the rejection of claim 7, the Examiner indicates that the Abrahamson reference teaches “if a home non-home communication network of the mobile station is identified as being available” (see page 5 at lines 19-20 of the Final Office Action), and provides support in the Abrahamson reference for the same, despite the fact that the limitations of claim 7 recite “if a home communication network is identified as being available.”

The Applicant respectfully submits that that such deficiency remains because the prior art of record fails to teach, suggest, and render obvious the inventive techniques as claimed. As apparent, the prior art fails to teach or suggest the step that “if a home communication network of the mobile station is identified as being available, selecting and operating with the home communication network” as claimed in context, and the Examiner has failed to demonstrate and articulate the same.

Further, although the Examiner provides a rejection of claims that is similar to the previous rejection of claims in the Office Action of 25 August 2006, the Examiner fails to articulate or reply to any of the Applicant’s previous arguments (extending 4-5 pages in length), other than by paraphrasing the Applicant’s claim language and citing to inapplicable passages in the Abrahamson reference.

According to conventional GSM techniques, after recovering from an out-of-coverage condition, a mobile station operates to select the PLMN with which it had just previously registered (i.e. its "RPLMN"). If the RPLMN is unavailable, the mobile station performs a scan to identify and select a PLMN which may be the HPLMN. However, the specifications do not clearly and specifically address the situation where the RPLMN is not the HPLMN of the mobile station. If the RPLMN is not the HPLMN, and the HPLMN is available after the recovery from the out-of-coverage condition, it is specified that the mobile station is limited to selecting the non-home RPLMN (if available) upon recovery. Such conventional operation is described in ETSI specs 3.22/23.122.

Advantageously, the present invention provides an inventive solution to such problem. See page 19 at lines 26-31 of the present application:

Thus, the above method provides a solution to a problem that the specifications do not clearly and specifically address: the situation where the RPLMN is not the HPLMN of the mobile station. If the RPLMN is not the HPLMN, and the HPLMN is available after the recovery from the out-of-coverage condition or after power-on, the standards specify that the mobile station is limited to selecting the non-home RPLMN (if available).

Note that new independent claim 50 is directed to the particular embodiment as it relates specifically to Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) networks utilizing HPLMNs and RPLMNs.

Again, the Abrahamson reference reflects such teachings of the prior art. The specific emphasis in the Abrahamson reference, however, is on cell reselection techniques between GSM and W-CDMA networks for dual-mode mobile devices. The Abrahamson reference places no emphasis or focus on network selection techniques. In the rejection of claims, the Examiner makes specific references to paragraphs in the Abrahamson reference. In paragraphs 67-68 of the Abrahamson reference, for example, it is stated that:

W-CDMA defines a mechanism whereby a terminal operating on a VPLMN periodically attempts to obtain service on its HPLMN or a higher priority PLMN. This mechanism is referred to as an HPLMN background search mechanism and is described in a document 3GPP TS 23.122, section 4.4.3.3. The HPLMN background search is performed periodically if the terminal is roaming and in idle mode. The first HPLMN background search is performed between 2 to T minutes from the time the terminal is powered on, and each subsequent background search is performed T minutes from the prior background search. The value for the parameter T may be configured by the network operator and is stored in an elementary file EF_{HPLMN}, which is stored in a SIM or a USIM. If a value is not specified for T, then a default value of 60 minutes is used for the background search. The elementary file EF_{HPLMN} for the SIM is described in document 3GPP TS 31.102, section 4.2.6.

Searches for W-CDMA cells may be performed periodically at regular time intervals. In one embodiment, W-CDMA searches may be performed automatically by the terminal at the same time that HPLMN background searches are performed (i.e., every T minutes, except for the first background search which is between 2 and T minutes from power on). In another embodiment, W-CDMA searches may be performed at time intervals that are less than or greater than T minutes. The time duration between W-CDMA searches may be indicated by a parameter T_{WCDMA}, which may be stored in non-volatile memory for the terminal. The use of a separate T_{WCDMA} parameter for the time period between W-CDMA searches allows the terminal to perform W-CDMA searches at the desired frequency.

As detailed above, the Abrahamson reference discusses both HPLMN background searches and W-CDMA cell searches. As apparent, HPLMN background searches and W-CDMA cell searches are two different types of searches employed by the mobile device. Also as made apparent, HPLMN background searches of the prior art are performed on a *periodic basis based on a timer* (perhaps as long as once per hour). Note further that an HPLMN background search of the prior art is performed while a network connection is already made and available, not when made such network connection is unavailable (e.g. regaining signal coverage from an out-of-coverage condition, or powering on the mobile station from a power-off state entered while operating with the non-home communication network). As stated in the Abrahamson reference, the

HPLMN background and W-CDMA cell searches may be triggered merely by an expiration of the same timer.

In paragraph 70 of the Abrahamson reference, it is stated that “a W-CDMA search may be performed if the terminal enters coverage after losing coverage of the last GSM network.” Again, however, a W-CDMA cell search of the Abrahamson reference is not the same thing as an HPLMN background search. Therefore, there is no teaching or suggestion that a HPLMN background search is performed in response to the mobile device regaining coverage from an out-of-coverage condition. As apparent, the Abrahamson reference teaches the same deficiencies of conventional techniques.

For these reasons alone, the rejection of such claims are overcome and such claims are allowable over the prior art of record.

In addition, the Applicant respectfully notes that U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2005/0059397 does not qualify as prior art for the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) with respect to claims 1-17, 33-34, and 50. Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c), such prior art shall not preclude patentability where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the claimed invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.

In the present case, the subject matter and the claimed invention were owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person at the time the claimed invention was made. More particularly, the subject matter of the present application was fully assigned from Gunaratnam et al. (i.e. all inventors of the present application) to Research In Motion Limited no later than the end of April 2004. At the time of filing the application on 27 February 2004, the patent application was subject to such assignment. See the attached Patent Assignment Abstract of Title for the subject patent application (Attachment #1). On the other hand, the subject matter of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2005/0059397 was assigned to Research In Motion Limited on 21 October 2003. See the attached Patent Assignment Abstract of Title for the subject matter of US2005/0059397 (Attachment #2). As apparent, the date of

assignment to Research In Motion Limited for U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2005/0059397 is 21 October 2003, which continues through the time of the claimed invention which was fully assigned no later than the end of April 2004.

Based on the above, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2005/0059397 does not qualify as prior art for any obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Thus, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the step of “identifying a plurality of communication networks in a coverage area within which the mobile station is operating” as the Examiner previously argues.

Thus, as provided above, the Examiner has failed to demonstrate that the applicable prior art of record teaches or suggests each and every limitation of the claims, and therefore such claims are allowable over the prior art of record.

Further, an issue associated with the above-described problem of prior art techniques relates specifically to claims 18-32 and 44-49. In particular, GSM standards also specify that if the last RPLMN is unavailable while the mobile station is in “manual” network selection mode, the mobile station shall camp on any network providing emergency service. This selected network, however, may not be the optimal network with which to operate, especially, for example, if the home network is made available.

The present application is directed further to a solution to this additional problem with manual network selection, and is defined in claims 18-32 and dependent claims 44-49. The prior art of record fails to teach or suggest other steps which occur “in response to regaining signal coverage from an out-of-coverage condition with the manually-selected non-home communication network” or “in response to being powered-on from a power-off state entered while in the manual network selection mode.” In particular, the prior art fails to teach the following steps which are utilized after such events: “if the non-home communication network is unavailable and the home communication network is also unavailable: causing a list of available communication networks to be displayed for a manual network selection procedure for manual network selection and operation with one of the available communication networks” and “if the non-home communication

network is unavailable but the home communication network is identified as being available: instead of carrying out the manual network selection procedure for the manual network selection and operation with one of the available communication networks, selecting and operating with the home communication network.”

The Examiner makes references to passages in the Abrahamson reference in attempt to identify such limitations. However, none of these references demonstrate any teaching or suggestion of the claimed limitations in the Abrahamson reference. The most relevant passage is paragraph 88 in the Abrahamson reference which states that “[a] W-CDMA search may also be performed in accordance with manual input received from a display and input/output (I/O unit 340. The search results and/or the reselected cell may also be displayed for the user via unit 340.”

As apparent, this cited passage (as well as the others) fails to teach or suggest a technique where “if the non-home communication network is unavailable and the home communication network is also unavailable: [cause] a list of available communication networks to be displayed for a manual network selection procedure for manual network selection and operation with one of the available communication networks” which is performed “in response to regaining signal coverage from an out-of-coverage condition with the manually-selected non-home communication network while in the manual network selection mode, or in response to being powered-on from a power-off state while in the manual network selection mode.” Nor do such cited passages teach or suggest a technique where “if the non-home communication network is unavailable but the home communication network is identified as being available: instead of carrying out the manual network selection procedure for the manual network selection and operation with one of the available communication networks, selecting and operating with the home communication network” as claimed in the combination, which is again performed “in response to regaining signal coverage from an out-of-coverage condition with the manually-selected non-home communication network while in the manual network selection mode, or in response to being powered-on from a power-off state while in the manual network selection mode.”

Further techniques recited in the dependent claims are also not taught nor suggested in the prior art. In dependent claim 46, for example, the act of selecting and operating with the home communication network is performed after an expiration of a predetermined time period. In dependent claim 47, for example, the technique further involves “prior to selecting and operating with the home communication network: causing a visual input prompt to be displayed for manual network selection of the home communication network; and wherein the act of selecting and operating with the home communication network is performed in response to receiving the manual network selection of the home communication network via the visual input prompt.”

The above-stated and claimed techniques are advantageous, for example, as described on page 22 at lines 1-5:

Advantageously in FIG. 7, even in a manual selection mode where choices are made by the end user, the mobile station makes the end user aware of recent availability of the home network in a timely and unobtrusive fashion. Overall, the mobile station helps facilitate the selection of the best network for the end user even in the manual selection mode.

For these particular reasons, the rejection of claims 18-32 and 44-49 are also overcome.

Additional reasons for the further allowability of both the independent and dependent claims are apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, but are not articulated herein due to the reasons already presented above.

Thus, claims 1-50 are allowable over the over the prior art of record. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims and allowance of the application as all statutory requirements have now been met.

Thank you. Please feel free to contact the undersigned if there are any questions or concerns regarding this submission.

Respectfully submitted,

/John J. Oskorep/

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JOHN J. OSKOREP
Reg. No. 41,234

JOHN J. OSKOREP, ESQ. LLC
ONE MAGNIFICENT MILE CENTER
980 N. MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 1400
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611 USA

Telephone: (312) 222-1860 Fax: (312) 475-1850